

any way,” and that the “White House’s involvement in this matter . . . was limited to routine status inquiries to the Department [of the Interior] by a member of my staff.” While Ickes acknowledged in the letter the possibility that he spoke with Fowler about Hudson, he wrote that he had no recollection of speaking to the President or Bruce Lindsey about Hudson. Moreover, in response to McCain’s inquiry about a discussion between Ickes and Babbitt about the timing of the Hudson decision, Ickes wrote that he did “not believe any such conversation ever took place.”⁶⁰⁶

Comparison of Shea’s initial draft of Ickes’s response letter to the final version suggests that Ickes chose to respond to one question in McCain’s letter not addressed in Shea’s draft, the one about active involvement by high-level White House staff on resolving disputes between competing Indian tribes during his tenure. Ickes responded to McCain’s comment and question with the following:

The ‘active involvement by high-level White House staff’ you refer to in your letter simply did not, and does not, occur. We are occasionally contacted by the Democratic National Committee, members of Congress, interested parties and others inquiring as to the status of particular decisions. In these instances, we merely seek to obtain the information necessary to respond to their requests. Where these efforts include an effort to secure our assistance in achieving a particular outcome, we decline to become involved, regardless of the source of the request. As a result, I cannot think of any instance during my tenure at the White House where I personally intervened in Interior Department decisions directly affecting Indian tribes.

Ickes’s representations to McCain in this paragraph are at odds with his previous involvement, and that of other members of the White House staff, in “Interior Department

⁶⁰⁶Shea’s draft of the Ickes letter stated: “I have absolutely no recollection of any such conversation ever having taken place.” Ickes crossed out the word “absolutely” in that sentence, and in the final version Ickes changed the entire sentence to read as set forth in the above text.